



Legislative Testimony
765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
860-523-9146
www.acluct.org

**Written Testimony Opposing
Senate Bill 279, An Act Exempting the Date of Birth of a Police Officer
from Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act**

Senator Larson, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Verrengia, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

My name is David McGuire, and I am executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 279, An Act Exempting the Date of Birth of a Police Officer from Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

As an organization that values government transparency and accessibility, the ACLU-CT supports people's access to public records created by municipalities. We believe this bill would stifle people's abilities to access information they have a right to obtain while creating unequal privacy protections for some people based solely on occupation. We therefore oppose this bill, which creates unequal privacy protections and could run afoul of Freedom of Information principles.

This bill would, among other things, prohibit public agencies from disclosing the date of birth of a police officer who is a sworn member of a municipal police department or Division of State Police or of "a sworn law enforcement officer within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection" when that person is employed by that agency. It would also prohibit any public agency, whether it employs the person or not, from disclosing the date of birth of someone in the aforementioned categories if that person submits a nondisclosure request to the agency. The bill would also require the agency to "make a reasonable effort to redact the date of birth of any person who has requested that" their date of birth be kept confidential.

The ACLU-CT believes it is unfair to allow only some people to ask for nondisclosure of their date of birth while others cannot avail themselves of that exception. If the committee is to pass the bill, I would recommend that it be expanded to allow all people, not just police officers, to sign a nondisclosure

statement regarding their date of birth. This privacy exception for all people would be more fair and just to the people of Connecticut.

Furthermore, police officers' residential addresses are already protected from disclosure by their employers, and they can already avail themselves of a law passed in 2012 allowing them to request that their addresses not be disclosed by any public agency that does not employ them. Nondisclosure of police officers' dates of birth seems unnecessary and unfair and takes even more information out of the hands of Connecticut residents who deserve to know who is protecting them and their communities.

I urge the committee to oppose this unnecessary and unfair bill.